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THE EARLE of MELFORT's LETTER To the Presbyterian-Ministers IN SCOTLAND,

Writ in his *Majesty's* Name upon their *Address*; Together with some *Remarks* upon it.

The Earle of *Melfort's Letter.*

Gentlemen;

I *Am commanded by his* Majesty, *to signify unto you his gracious acceptance of your* Address, *that he is well satisfied with your* Loyalty *expressed therein; for the which he resolves to perpetuate the favour, not only during his own* Reign, *but also to lay down Ways for its* Continuance, *and that by* appointing *in the next ensuing* Parliament *the taking off all* Penal Statutes *contrary to the* Liberty *or* Toleration *granted by him.*

His Majesty *knows, that Enemies to* Him, *to* You, *and this* Toleration, *will be using all Endeavours to infringe the same; but as ever the Happiness of his* Subjects *Standing in* Liberty of Conscience, *and the Security of their* Properties (*next the Glory of God*) *hath been his* Majesty's *great end, so he intends to continue, if he have all suitable Encouragement and Concurrence from you in your* Doctrine *and* Practice; *and therefore as he hath taken away the* Protestant Penal Statutes *lying on you, and herein has walked contrary not only to other* Catholick Kings, *but also in a way different from* Protestant Kings *who have gone before him, whose Maxime was to undoe you, by* Fining, Confining, *and taking away your* Estates, *and to harrass you in your* Persons, Liberties *and* Priviledges; *so he expects a thankful acknowledgment from you, by making your* Doctrine *tend, to cause all his* Subjects *to walk* obediently, *and by your* Practice *walking so as shall be most pleasing to his* Majesty, *and the concurring with him for the removing these* Penal Statutes: *and he further expects that you continue your Prayers to God for his long and happy* Reign, *and for all Blessings on his* Person *and* Government; *and likewise that you look well to your* Doctrine, *and that your* Example *be influential: all these are his* Majesty's *Commands.*

Sic subs.

MELFORT.

REMARKS.

THe *Secretary hand* is known to all the *Writing Masters* of the Town; but here is an Essay of the *Secretary's Stile* for the Masters of our Language: This is an Age of Improvements, and Men that come very young into Imployments, make commonly a great progress; therefore common things are not to be expected here: it is true, some Roughnesses in the

Stile seem to intimate that the Writer could turn his *Conscience* more easily than he can do his Pen, and that the one is a little stiffer and less compliant than the other. He tells the *Addressers*, that *His Majesty is well satisfied with their Loyalty contained in their Address; for the which he resolves to perpetuate the favour.* It appears that the *Secretary Stile* and the *Notary Stile* come nearer one another than was generally believed: *For the which* here, & *infringe the same* afterwards, are beauties borrowed from the *Notary Stile*; the *foresaid* is not much coarser. The King's *perpetuating the Favour* is no easy thing, unless he could first *perpetuate* himself. Now tho his Majesty's Fame will be certainly *immortal*, yet to our great Regret his Person is *mortal*; so it is hard to conceive, how this *perpetuity* should be settled.

The Method here proposed is a new Figure of the *Secretary Stile*: which is the *Appointing in the next ensuing Parliament the taking off all Penal Laws*. All former *Secretaries* used the modest Words of *proposing* or *recommending*; but he who in a former *Essay* of this *Stile*, told us of his *Majesty's Absolute Power, to which all the Subjects are to obey without reserve*, furnishes us now with this *new* term of the *King's appointing* what shal be done in *Parliament*. But what if after all, the *Parliament* proves so stubborn, as not to comply with this *Appointment*, I am afraid then the *Perpetuity* will be of a short continuance. He in the next place, mentions the *Liberty* or *Toleration granted by the King*. *Liberty* is not so hard a Word, but that it might be understood without this Explanation *or Toleration*, unless the *Secretary Stile* either approaches to the *Notary Stile* in some nauseous Repetitions, or that he would intimate by this, that all the *Liberty* that is left the Subjects is comprehended in this *Toleration*. And indeed, after *Absolute Power* was once asserted, it was never fit to name *Liberty* without some restriction. After this comes a stately Period, *The Enemies to him, to you, and to this Toleration*. Yet I should be sorry if it were true; for I hope there are many *Enemies to this Toleration*, who are neither *Enemies* to the *King*, nor to these *Addressers*; and that on the contrary they are *Enemies* to it, because they are the *best Friends* that both the *King* and the *People* have. It is now no secret, that tho' both the *Prince* and *Princess* of *Orange*, are great Enemies to *Persecution*, and in particular to all Rigour against the *Presbyterians*, yet they are not satisfied with the way in which this *Toleration* is granted. But the reckoning of them as *Enemies* either to the *King* or the *People*, is one of the Figures of this *Stile*, that will hardly pass: and some will not stick to say, that the Writer of this *Letter*, has with this dash of his Pen, declared more Men *Enemies* to the King, than ever he will be able to make *Friends* to him. He tells them next, that these *Enemies* will be *using all endeavours to infringe the same*. This is also a strong Expression. We know the use of the *Noun Infraction*, but *Infringe* is borrowed from the *Notaries*; yet the plain sense of this seems to be, that those *Enemies* will disturb the *Meetings*, of which I do not hear any of them have the least thought, yet by a secret Figure of the *Secretary Stile*, perhaps this belongs to all those who either think that the *King* cannot do it by Law, or that will not give their Vote to confirm it in *Parliament*: but I am not so well acquainted with all the Mysteries of this *Stile*, as to know its full depth.

There comes next a long period of 50 words, for I was at the pains to count them all, which seemed a little too prolix for so short a *letter*, especially in one that writes after the *French* pattern. *But as ever the Happiness of his Subjects, Standing in Liberty of Conscience, and the Security of their Properties, next the Glory of God, hath been his Majesty's great End; So he Intends to continue, if he have all suteable Encouragement and Concurrence from you, in your Doctrine and Practice.* The putting *ever* at the beginning of the Period, and at so great a Distance from that to which it belongs, is a new beauty of *Stile*. And the *Standing* of this *Happiness*, makes me reflect on that which I hear a *Scotch Preacher* deli-

delivered in a *Sermon*, that he doubted this *Liberty* would prove but like a *Standing Drink*. The *King's receiving suteable Encouragement from his Subjects*, agrees ill with the height of *Stile* that went before, of *appointing what the Parliament must do*. *Kings* receive returns of *Duty* and *Obedience* from their *Subjects*; but hitherto *Encouragements* was a word used among Equals: the applying it to the *King*, is a new figure. A man not versed in the *Secretary Stile* would have expressed this matter thus. *His Majesty has ever made the Happiness of his Subjects, which consists in Liberty of Conscience, and the Security of Property, his great end, next to the Glory of God: and he intends to do so still, if he receives all suteable returns from you in your Doctrine and practice.* I have marked this the more particularly, to make the difference between the *Common* and the *Secretary Stile* the more sensible. But what need is there of the *Concurrence of the Addressers*, with the *King*, if he *appoints the next Parliament to take off all the Penal Laws*. Must we likewise believe that His Majesty's Zeal for the *Happiness of his Subjects*, depends on the Behaviour of These *Addressers*: and on the *Encouragement* that he receives from them, so that he will not *continue* it, unless they *Encourage* him in it. This is but an Incertain tenure, and not like to be *perpetual*. But after all the *Secretary Stile* is not the *Royal Stile*, so notwithstanding this beautiful Period, we hope our Happiness is more steady, than to turn upon the *Encouragings* of a few Men: otherwise if it is a *standing Happiness* yet it is a very tottering one. The *Protestant Penal Statutes*, is another of his Elegancies: for since all the *Penal Laws* as well those against *Papists*, as those against *Dissenters*, were made by *Protestant Parliaments*, one does not see how fitly this Epithete comes in here; another would have worded this, thus, *the Penal Statutes made against Protestants*. But the *new Stile* has figures peculiar to it self, that pass in the *Common Stile* for *Improprieties*.

This Noble *Lord* is not contented to raise His Majesty's Glory above all other *Catholick Kings*, in this grant of *Liberty or Toleration*, in which there is no competition to be made; for tho the Most *Christian King*, who is the *Eldest son of that Church*, has indeed executed her *Orders* in their full extent of severity, yet His Majesty, who is but the *Cadet* in that *Church's* Catalogue of honour, it seems does not think that he is yet so much beholding to his *Mother* as to gratify her by the Destruction of his People: yet I say, as if this were too little, the *King's* Glory is here carried farther, even above the *Protestant Kings*, *who have gone before him: whose Maxime was to undo you, by Fining, Confining and taking away your Estates, and to harrass you in your Persons, Liberties and Priviledges*. Here is an honour that is done the King's *Ancestors* by one of his *Secretaries*, which is indeed new, and of his own Invention: the *Protestant Kings* can be no other than the Kings *Brother, his Father, and his Grandfather*. *Kings* shut out Q. *Elisabeth*, who might have been brought in if the more general term of *Crowned heads* had been made use of; but as the Writer has ordered it, the satyr falls singly on the King's *Progenitors*: for the *Papers* that were found in the *Strong Box*, will go near to put the late *King* out of the list of *Protestant Kings*: so that this Reproach lies wholly on the King's *Father* and his *Grand-father*. It is a little surprising, after all the Eloquence that has been Imployed to raise the Character of the late *Martyr* to so high a pitch, that one of his Sons *Secretaries* should set it under his hand in a *letter* that he pretends is written by the *King's* Commands, *that he made it a Maxime to undo his People*. The Writer of this *Letter* should have avoided the mentioning of *fines*, since it is not so long, since both *He* and his *Brother* valued themselves on a point that they carried in the *Council of Scotland*, that *Husbands* should be fined for their *Wives* not going to *Church*, tho it was not founded on any Law. And of all Men

living

living *he* ought to be the laſt that should ſpeak of *the taking away Eſtates*; who got a very fair one during the preſent *Reign*, by an *Act of Parliament*, that Attainted a *Gentleman* in a *Method* as new as his *Stile* is; Upon this ground, that two *Privy Councellours* declared, they believed him *guilty*. He will hardly find among all the *Maximes of thoſe Proteſtant Perſecuting Kings* any one that will Juſtify this.

It ſeems the *New Stile* is not very Copious in Words, ſince *Doctrine* is *three* times repeated in ſo ſhort a *Letter*: He tells them, that their *Doctrine muſt tend to cauſe all the ſubjects to walk obediently*; now by *obediently* in this *Stile*, is to *obey the Abſolute Power Without reſerve*; for to *obey according to Law*, would paſs now for a Crime: this being then his meaning, it is probable that the *Encouragements* which are neceſſary to make His Majeſty continue the happineſs of his Subjects, will not be ſo very great, as to Merit the *perpetuating this favour*. There is with this a heavy charge laid upon them as to their *practice*; *that it muſt be ſuch as ſhall be moſt pleaſing to His Majeſty*; for certainly that can only be by their turning *Papiſts*: ſince a *Prince* that is ſo zealous for his *Religion*, as His Majeſty is, cannot be ſo well pleaſed with any other thing as with this. *Their concurring with the King to remove the Penal Laws*, comes over again; for tho Repetitions are Impertinencies in the *Common Stile*, they are Flowers in the *new one*.

In Concluſion, he tells them, that the *King expects, that they will continue their prayers for him*; yet this does not agree too well with a *Catholick* Zeal: for the prayers of *Damned Heretick*s cannot be worth the asking; for the third time he tells them to *look well to their Doctrine*: now this is a little ambiguous; for it may either ſignify, that they ſhould ſtudy the Controverſies well, ſo as to be able to defend their Doctrine ſolidly, or that they ſhould ſo mince it, that nothing may fall from them in their *Sermons* againſt *Popery*; this will be indeed a *looking to their Doctrine*; but I do not know whether it will be thought a *looking well to it or not*. He adds, *that their Example be Influential*: I confeſs this hard new Word frighted me: I ſuppoſe the meaning of it is, that *their practice may be ſuch as that it may have an Influence on others*: yet there are both good and bad Influences, a good Influence will be the animating the people to a Zeal for their *Religion*; and a *bad one* will be the ſlackning and ſofning of that Zeal. A little more Clearneſs here had not been amiſs.

As for the laſt Words of this Letter; *that all theſe are his Majeſty's Commands*; it is very hard for me to bring my ſelf to believe them. For certainly he has more Piety for the Memory of the *late Martyr*, and more regard both to *himſelf*, to his *children*, and to his *people*, than to have ever given any ſuch commands.

In order to the communicating this Piece of Elegance to the World, I wiſh the Tranſlating it into *French* were recommended to Mr. *d'Alheville*: that it may appear whether the *Secretary Stile* will look better in his *Iriſh French*, than it does now in the *Scotch Engliſh* of him who penne dit.

FINIS.

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